

The Locke Family Newsletter

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The Revolutionary War in the Carolinas

We've all heard of battles such as Kings Mountain and Cowpens, but The Revolutionary War from 1780 to 1782 in the Carolinas was much more widespread than most of us would ever imagine. The British Loyalists were concentrated around Charleston, and the ruthless Lieutenant Colonel Tarleton was on a rampage in South Carolina to defeat the Americans any way he could, including the massacre of civilians. During the War, our Locke ancestors were still living in Halifax County, North Carolina, and they were involved in the War as it spread to that area, but the major battles were happening to the south, in places that would become very familiar to William and Josias Locke once they were residents of Chester County, South Carolina, having moved from Halifax County.



Americans defeat the British "Red Coats" at Cowpens...

Recently I found an account of the Scotch-Irish migration into the Carolinas written by historian **William Lee Anderson III** in the early 2000's. It is from that document that I will share passages about the history of the War that will be of interest to you.

This article will continue on Page 11 of the Newsletter...

The Passing of Locke Boyce's wife, Ernestine

I received a call from Sadie Hope Boyce Flowe, sister of Locke Boyce, that Locke's beloved Ernestine passed away in Jacksonville on February 13th at the age of 94. She and Locke had enjoyed twenty-four wonderful years of marriage. Ironically, both she and Locke had survived Covid last fall. She is survived by her daughter, Evelyn Parker, two grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

Locke and Ernestine were regulars at the Locke reunions, driving from their home west of Jacksonville to the mountains and to Landsford on the Catawba River, but considering that after they were married, they drove cross country to the Pacific Ocean, road trips came naturally to them. They spent many peaceful times at their cottage on the St. Johns River south of Jacksonville, and enjoyed their boat and wetting a few fishing lines. Our sympathies go out to Cousin Locke and his family, and to Ernestine's family.



This Past Year has Challenged Us All...

To ignore the total upheaval of all our lives because of this awful virus would be a dereliction of duty on my part. I had my shots as soon as the vaccine became available to me, and all of the folks I know who have been approved for shots have had at least the first one. If you are among those who have decided not to be vaccinated, I hope you will consider the ramifications to our vulnerable population who cannot be vaccinated for one reason or another, especially our children. We all have a responsibility to do our part to bring this pandemic under control.

We can't let our guards down now, after all we have endured. Wear your mask. Keep a safe distance, avoid gatherings of people who may have been exposed, and use your common sense. We don't suddenly stop using seat belts because we've never been in a bad accident. Think.

One of my cousins, who is 89, had her traditional Christmas celebration in her home with her entire family, with no one wearing a mask. The following week, two people came down with Covid, and that required that everyone get tested, and go into quarantine. It was a miracle that no one else got sick, but this just shows how important it still is to follow the guidelines and stay safe. Soon, life will be back to some degree of normality, but only if everyone who qualifies gets their shots. Don't become a statistic.

The Philadelphia Wagon Road through the Carolinas

Lately, I've been following a blog called "Piedmont Trails", which concentrates on the early settlement of the Carolinas. I recommend that you check it out, and follow it if you want to learn more about the history of the areas where our Locke ancestors settled. One of the main subjects covered in the blog is the history of the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road as it enters Virginia and North Carolina on its way south. www.Piedmonttrails.com

The Great Wagon Road, also known as the Great Warrior's Path, the Carolina Road, the Great Valley Road and the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road came into existence years before the first colonial settlers began living in the mid sections of present day Virginia. First used by the Native American tribes as a hunting trail and a communication trail between the tribes of the present day mid-Atlantic region to the upper northwest territory of Ohio and Michigan. Later, the road became a trading route involving the exchange companies of the 18th century and the Native American tribes. Goods such as gunpowder, salt, fabric, tea and other commodities were used as arbitration techniques in order to maintain peaceful connections between the Native Americans and the colonists.

The years that followed, primarily dating from 1740 to 1800, allowed the road to take witness to America's first and greatest inland migration. The vast number of people who traveled the route during this time period speaks volumes to the legacy and history of this road. Measuring only as a footpath during the early years, the road quickly grew to accommodate huge Conestoga wagons filled with supplies, personal items and dreams of the future. Families numbering tens of thousands began the journey from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Delaware, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New York and present day Maine to cross the Potomac River and into the wilderness known as Virginia. Land was widely known to be available in North Carolina as the prime acreage in the middle and northern colonies were quickly developed leaving little opportunity for the majority of these families to become landowners.

This overwhelming migration allowed the southern colonies to increase their population by over 100%. With this vast percentage, settlements and counties were quickly established and the southern colonies were filled with various types of cultures and religions. The action of these families moving southward also contributed greatly to the need of the militia during the French and Indian War as well as the American Revolutionary War. Groups numbering as many as twenty wagons traveled together, settled together, and organized themselves together. These tens of thousands of people prepared themselves to grow and harvest their crops, practice their trade and proclaim freedom for their heirs. Statistics show that during a thirty-year span, South Carolina improved the number of settlers from 70,000 to over 140,000.

Images of Our Families...

I'm always on the lookout for photos of Locke descendants on Facebook and anyplace else where you post them for the world to see. I hope the names beneath the photos are correct, but I welcome corrections when I get them wrong.....

From my Family... We descend from Mattie Locke Helms, through her son, Walston "Buddy"



David Helms, son of Wade and Vicki, with son Eric, and daughter, Penny, with their mom, Stephanie



Buddy's son, Wade, and Vicki Younger son, Matt, and his wife, Shana. They live and ski in Colorado



Ashley, 16 year old daughter of Michael and Charlene Helms Freedland.



Mom Charlene, daughter of Eddie and Carol Helms, turned 50 in Feb.



Ashley with older brother, Blake, visiting Ivy League campuses in February. Harvard ???

The Family of Harold Helms, Mattie Locke's third Son

From Daughter Hazel Helms Brotherton...



*Tracy Fox Adams and daughter, Savannah,
daughter and granddaughter to Debra Brotherton Fox*



Shelby Parker with Maverick's dad



*Shelby's mom, Donna Brotherton Parker and
her Sweetie, Jim Morris*



Shelby's Family at Christmas



Shelby's son, Maverick



*Debra Brotherton Fox's daughter
Erin Fox Clough*

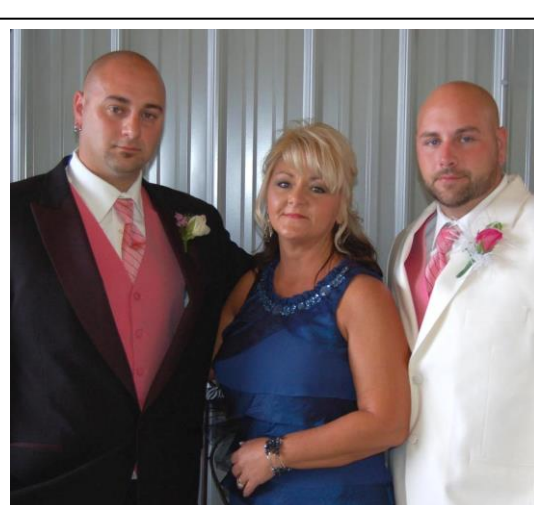
From Daughter Martha Helms Sisk...



Belinda Sisk Clay's Grandkids



Martha's son Terry Sisk



Belinda with sons. Jason and Matthew, a while back



Martha Helms Sisk with Belinda



Belinda's son Jason with his kids...

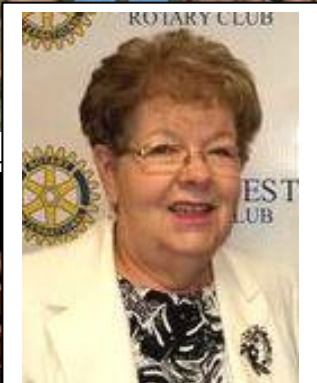


Son Matthew with his family...

The Family of Mamie Locke Boyce through son Bill, and wife Dora Winchester Boyce



*Tammy and David, above,
David's mother, Dora, to the
right, daughter Judy, to the left.*



*Dora's son, Tom, above, and
son, John, to the right.*



The Family Portrait

Front Row: Evie Kirby, Rosie Kirby standing in front of John Craig Kirby, Maddy Boyce, Brandt Boyce standing in front of Miles Boyce and Diane Boyce. Back Row: Cody Kirby, Gabby Johnson, David Boyce, Tammy Boyce, Bennett Boyce being held by Matthew Boyce, and Macon Boyce.
Evie (Evelyn Rae Kirby) and Rosie (Rosalee Hart Kirby) are Cody & John Craig's daughters. Brandt William Boyce and Bennett Winchester Boyce are Matthew & Diane's sons.

The Family of Jerry and Carolyn Locke in Chester County

Jerry descends from James Hulse, Josias, through Benjamin, Josiah, Jefferson, John, Sr.



Jerry and Carolyn with grandson, Jordan, and granddaughters Julie and Margot



Jordan is a senior at Wingate University, Julie is a junior at N.C. State, and Margot is a junior at Lewisville High...

The 'Brown Gold' that falls from Pine Trees in North Carolina

Mike Wilson's longleaf pine stands now produce up to 170,000 bales of pine straw a year, harvested mostly by hand, for use as high-end mulch.

By Todd C. Frankel

WEST END, N.C. — There is a saying among some farmers in the Carolina Sandhills: “A man would have to be a fool to cut down a longleaf pine.” It’s not because the gangly-limbed tree is particularly beautiful. The pine doesn’t have a magnolia’s flowers or an oak’s shade. And it has nothing to do with the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker that calls the tree home. The longleaf pine’s most obvious attribute is its strong, straight timber — perfect for utility poles. But the reason that longleaf pines are prized around here: their needles.

The dropped needles are in such demand that a lucrative business has grown up around raking, baling and selling them to landscapers and homeowners as mulch. Three varieties of pine needles are farmed, but the discarded debris of a longleaf pine is the most sought-after — and fetches the best price — because of its unusual length and high resin content, making it an attractive, water-retaining ground cover for gardens. Some even call it “brown gold.” And like anything valuable left just lying on the ground, theft is a problem. That’s why North Carolina made it a felony to steal pine needles.



It's a case of one person's trash being another person's treasure — and, in this case, generating an estimated \$200 million in annual sales across the Southeast. The pine straw industry, as it's known, also helps preserve existing longleaf pine forests and supports the creation of new tree stands out of former tobacco fields and peach orchards. The bargain does have an ecological cost. Leaving the pine needles on the ground is ideal. But increasingly there is support for conservation efforts that acknowledge nature can't be locked away behind museum glass and allowing that some measured uses can offer protection, such as permitting cattle to graze on prairie lands to keep them open and free of woody vegetation. "It shows a reasonable compromise between exploitive uses and conservation," said Jeff Marcus, a scientist with the Nature Conservancy who works on the restoration of North Carolina's longleaf pine ecosystem. Below, a worker loads pine needles into a baler at Wilson's farm.



The ability to profit from pine needles has benefited longleaf pine forests that for decades have been decimated by logging and development. “You can only sell the timber once. The pine needles come every year,” said Mike Wilson, who runs a pine straw operation here, two hours east of Charlotte. The numbers just work out better, said Terry Bryant, who runs Pinestar Farms in nearby Carthage. He could get \$4,000 an acre for clear-cutting his mature longleaf pines for timber. Or, he said, he could earn \$1,200 an acre collecting pine needles from the same trees — every year.



Farmers sell longleaf pine straw at roadside stalls. Garden stores stock it. Landscapers buy it in bulk. It’s more expensive than wood bark or chips. But it’s preferred as a ground cover because it doesn’t attract termites. Needles from slash and loblolly pine trees are also sold as pine straw. But the longleaf stands out. One landscaper described his preference by telling Wilson, “I don’t do Bojangles,” referring to the fast-food chicken chain headquartered in North Carolina. Longleaf pine straw, as he saw it, was a higher-end product. It held its color. It was special.

Demand for pine straw has grown over the past two decades, closely following the rate of home building in the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida and part of Alabama, said Ernest David Dickens, a forestry professor at the University of Georgia who studies the pine straw market. It’s also been a boon for farmers hoping to hold onto their land. Wilson, 83, started planting longleaf pine on his family farm — set just a few miles from the famed golf courses at Pinehurst Resort — in the late 1970s. His father and grandfather grew peaches. But the entire crop could be ruined by the slightest changes in the weather. They also tried mining sand, taking advantage of the region’s unusual soil. Switching from the fickle peach crop, Wilson figured he could do better with trees. He now owns more than 750 acres of longleaf pines and leases more, producing up to 170,000 bales of pine straw a year. The longleaf pine trees on his land are rooted in a mix of neat rows and wild scatter. “Look at it through there,” Wilson said, driving a dirt road next to a messy thicket of his trees. “That’s all natural regeneration.”

Pine straw is not a quick way to make money. Longleaf pines take a decade to even start producing needles. Collecting them is tricky. It's still done mostly by hand on Wilson's farm. The needles are raked away from the base of the trees. A lawn tractor with a rake and backpack blowers can help. But a worker still fluffs the pine straw with a pitchfork to shake free any dirt and leaves. Pine cones need to be tossed aside. And the longleaf can produce pineapple-sized pine cones. The cleaned needles then are stuffed into a hand-baling machine, which presses the needles into a wire-bound rectangle. "Labor is the biggest problem I have," Wilson said. His workers are paid by the bale. It's tough, seasonal work. But they can earn \$900 a week, Wilson said. He recalled one notably efficient worker who pulled in \$1,400 a week.

Theft of any amount of pine straw in North Carolina is a felony. As Wilson drove deeper into his property, he came upon Julio Santiago. Santiago had worked for Wilson for several years. He stood under a thick canopy of longleaf pines, shaded from the afternoon heat. Mariachi music played from a cell phone propped up on a nearby limb. Surrounded by small hills of brown longleaf pine needles, he pushed handfuls into the baler. His wife stood nearby, using a pitchfork to prepare fresh piles for him to bale. Each bale is worth just \$3 to \$5. But a trailer stacked with hundreds of bales is a target for thieves. Wilson said he still reminds his workers not leave too many bales sitting out overnight.



A rash of pine-straw thefts more than 20 years ago led Wilson and other pine straw farmers to press for protection. Law enforcement didn't take the thefts seriously, Wilson said. It was just pine needles. Theft of personal property valued at less than \$1,000 was a misdemeanor. But the pine straw farmers eventually persuaded state legislators to make it a felony to steal any amount of pine straw. It might've helped that the pine is North Carolina's official state tree. "I think I got the first conviction under that law," Wilson said.

May–June 1780, Carolina Upcountry, Cornwallis, Tarleton

The British Army operated from its base in Charleston, South Carolina, under command of 42-year-old Lieutenant General Charles Cornwallis. Within a month, it consolidated its control of South Carolina by establishing or strengthening principal forts at Georgetown, Camden, Ninety Six, and Augusta. These controlled the major rivers: Wateree (Catawba), Congaree (Saluda, Broad), and Savannah Rivers. It also established secondary outposts at Cheraw, Hanging Rock, Waxhaws, and Rocky Mount.

The organizational capabilities of the British Army were impressive. It could move over 1000 soldiers more than 20 miles a day. It included field artillery and as many as 50 wagons of gunpowder, a portable forge, medical equipment, musical instruments, gold coins, and baggage of personal belongings. Its commissary system supplied food and horse forage as it moved. Its entourage included independent traders, supporting the commissary, and women cooks and seamstresses. Terrain, vast distances, and American elusive tactics were suited to the British Legion, a mix of several hundred cavalymen, mounted infantry, and light cannon. Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton, age 25, led the Legion. He had remarkable success during spring and summer of 1780. While in pursuit of Americans forces, Tarleton's Legion began moving at 2:00 a.m. to arrive at a battlefield at daybreak. Such capabilities and tactics were designed to intimidate rebels. But ultimately, it was counterproductive because it provoked widespread resentment throughout the Piedmont and mountains.



Col. Buford



Tarleton



Cornwallis



Buford Massacre Battlefield

29 May 1780, Tarleton, Buford's Defeat at the Battle of the waxhaws

Colonel Abraham Buford was leading a regiment of Continental soldiers from Virginia to South Carolina to help defend Charleston. A group of soldiers coming from Charleston met them on the road and told them Charleston had already fallen

into the British hands. Col. Buford decided to turn the men back towards North Carolina to keep the British from advancing into South Carolina. On May 29, 1780, [Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton](#) and the British Legion caught up with Col. Buford's army at a place called "The Waxhaws" in the Catawba River valley, located four miles south of the North Carolina border. Over in fifteen minutes and with 113 Americans dead on the field, this massacre became the first major battle of the Southern Campaign.

The Battle of the Waxhaws also became a turning point in the Revolutionary War, but not for reasons the British might have hoped. Their intent was to make the back country colonists feel the "heel of the boot." Many patriots who had previously surrendered rejoined the fight to repay the harshness of "Tarleton's quarter" with a vengeance of their own.

The Background...

The American defenders of Charleston, after a six-week siege, surrendered the city on 12 May 1780. To extend British control over South Carolina, Lieutenant General Charles Lord Cornwallis and his army crossed Santee River and proceeded towards Camden. He dispatched the mobile British Legion to pursue the withdrawing 350 men of the Virginia Third Regiment of Continental soldiers who missed the Charleston siege and who were escorting South Carolina Governor John Rutledge to Salisbury, North Carolina. (Rutledge's actual official title was President of South Carolina.) Colonel Thomas Sumter, the former commander of South Carolina Sixth Continental Regiment, knew he was a likely target. He moved his family from his primary home just north of Nelson's Ferry on Santee River to his second home in the High Hills of the Santee. On 28 May, as the British Legion approached, Sumter left his family and escaped north. A few hours later, British soldiers burned his home.

At 3:00 p.m., after a 54-hour chase, the British Legion caught the Virginians along Salisbury Road in Waxhaw region, 30 miles southeast of Charlotte at the present-day intersection of highways SC9 and SC522. Buford, on a disadvantageous open field, seriously miscalculated. He made tactical errors in arranging his soldiers and ordering them to hold their fire. Tarleton's Legion, using a cavalry column, charged the Continental line formation, breaking it immediately. When Tarleton's horse was disabled, he lost effective command for 15 minutes during which surrendering Continentals were killed without quarter (mercy). Tarleton attributes his soldier's actions, —to a report amongst the cavalry, that they had lost their commander officer, which stimulated the soldiers to a vindictive asperity not easily restrained. In total, 113 Continentals were killed and over 150 were wounded, mostly with saber-slashed

skull and shoulder injuries. The horrible character of these wounds is described in the ordeal of Captain John Stokes, who later became a federal judge and for whom Stokes County, North Carolina, was named. Tarleton credits his victory to Buford's mistakes. Written on the battlefield monument is a quote of Charles Stedman, British commissary officer and later historian, —*"The king's troops were entitled to great commendation for their activity and ardor on this occasion, but the virtue of humanity was totally forgot."* This shocking event induced widespread resentment among residents of the Carolina upcountry. Soon the slogan —Tarleton's quarter! meant wanton cruelty. It was effective anti-British propaganda for the remainder of the war. Even today, a few Charlotteans still hold a grudge. They object to any new Charlotte street being named Tarleton. Buford was court-martialed, but exonerated.

Local Scotch-Irish took American wounded to Waxhaw Presbyterian Church for treatment. Among the caregivers were 13-year-old Andrew Jackson, his mother Elizabeth, and his brother Robert. Years later, Jackson wrote that the church floor was made into beds by removing pews and covering the floor with straw. The Virginia Continentals who died at the church were buried in the cemetery, but it is not known exactly where.

Old Waxhaw Presbyterian Church Cemetery



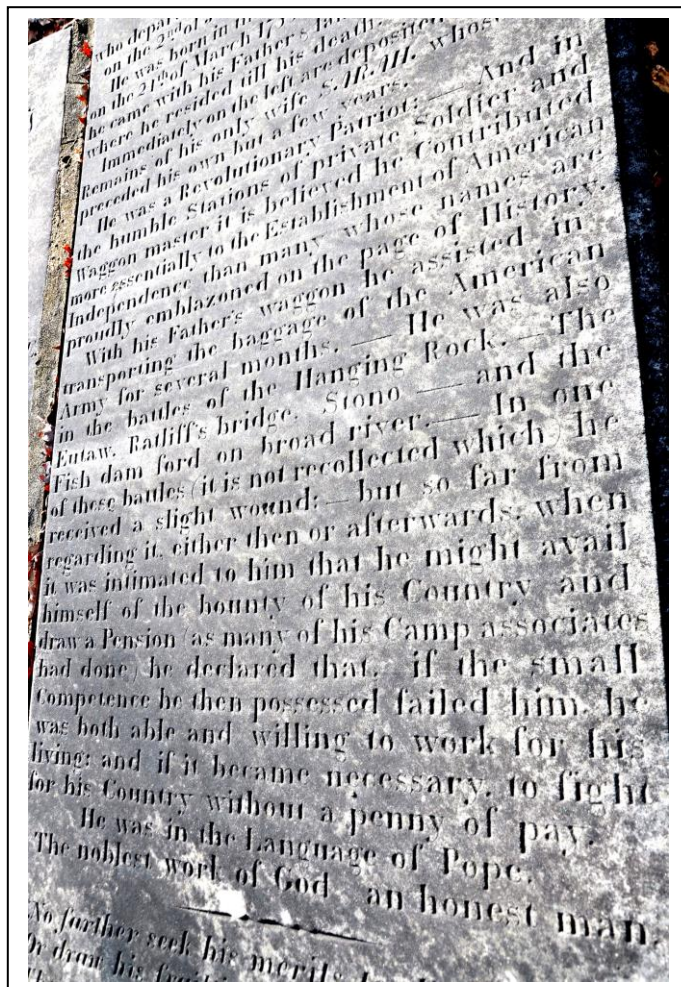
A number of notable individuals are interred at Old Waxhaw Presbyterian Church in South Carolina's Lancaster County, just south of the North Carolina state line. These include Andrew Jackson Sr., the father of the seventh U.S. president; William Richardson Davie, who led American troops in the Revolutionary War, served as governor of North Carolina and is considered the founder of the University of North Carolina; and James Witherspoon, lieutenant governor of South Carolina from 1826-28. One individual who doesn't garner the recognition of the above but is certainly

worthy of acknowledgement is William Blair, who came from Ireland to the US in the early 1770s.

Like many of the men buried at Old Waxhaw, Blair served the American cause in the Revolution. His contributions are etched onto the horizontal slab that sits atop a “chest tomb,” a brick and mortar edifice constructed over his grave. Blair’s epitaph contains more than 300 words, engraved in fine script that must have taken a stone carver a fair bit of time to craft.

It details the date of Blair’s birth and death, that he arrived from County Atrium at age 13 and that he was preceded in death by his wife Sarah, who rests next to him. What’s of particular note, however, is the description of Blair’s involvement in the American Revolution, and his life afterward:

“He was a Revolutionary Patriot: – And in the humble Stations of private Soldier and Waggon master. it is believed he Contributed more essentially to the Establishment of American Independence than many whose names are proudly emblazoned on the page of History. With his Father’s waggon he assisted in transporting the baggage of the American Army for several months. – He was also in the battles of the Hanging Rock. – The Eutaw, Ratliff’s bridge, Stono – and the Fish dam ford on broad river. ...”



The engagements referred to are the battles of [Hanging Rock](#), Aug. 6, 1780; [Eutaw Springs](#), Sept. 8, 1781; Ratliff’s or Radcliff’s Bridge, March 6, 1781; [Stono Ferry](#), June 20, 1779; and [Fishdam Ford](#), Nov. 9, 1780. Given that there were more battles and skirmishes fought in South Carolina than any other American colony during the Revolution, it’s almost a certainty that Blair saw action at other encounters, as well. Just as interesting is what follows after the details of Blair’s service:

"In one of these battles (it is not recollected which) he received a slight wound: but so far from regarding it, either then or afterwards, when it was intimated to him that he might avail himself of the bounty of his Country and draw a Pension (as many of his Camp associates had done) he declared that, if the small Competence he then possessed failed him, he was both able and willing to work for his living; and if it became necessary, to fight for his Country without a penny of pay. He was in the Language of Pope, The noblest work of God – an honest man. 'No farther seek his merits to disclose, Or draw his frailties from their dread abode; (There they alike in trembling hope repose) The bosom of his Father and his God.'"

Blair died on July 2, 1824, at age 65. He and his wife Sarah had seven children, including one son, James, who served four terms in Congress.

Today, Americans remember the likes of George Washington, Marquis de Lafayette and John Paul Jones when they're able to recall any military leaders from the Revolution War at all. But were it not for William Blair and thousands of others like him, men who served dutifully during the conflict and then quietly went about the business of building a nation, it's difficult to imagine that the Founding Fathers' ambitions would have ever been realized.

Chester County, Fishing Creek, and the first Lockes William Locke brought his family south from Halifax County, North Carolina, around 1800, followed by his younger brother, Josiah, in 1806. They settled along Fishing Creek in northern Chester County, South Carolina. Just twenty years prior to that, the fields and woods along Fishing Creek were witness to events that would ultimately turn the tide in America's War of Independence. Here is how historian Anderson described those pivotal events.

11 June 1780, Rocky Mount and Fishing Creek Presbyterian Churches (*Rocky Mount was located about three miles south of Great Falls, S.C.*) The newly established British outpost at Rocky Mount greatly disturbed members of Rocky Mount Presbyterian Church. Their minister, William Martin, preached, —"My hearers, talk and angry words will do no good. We must fight!" Alluding to Declaration of Arbroath, he said Americans had been —"forced to the declaration of their independence. Our forefathers in Scotland made a similar one and maintained that declaration with their lives; it is now our turn, brethren, to maintain this at all hazards." On 11 June, from Rocky Mount, a detachment of Tarleton's Legion, led by Captain Christian Huck, attempted to arrest Fishing Creek Presbyterian Church minister John Simpson. Not finding Simpson, Huck's men looted and burned the parsonage.

From *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, by Edward McCrady, published 1901, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., South Carolina, pp. 591-592:

The Rev. John Simpson, a Presbyterian minister of Irish descent, a native of New Jersey, had, some years before, succeeded the Rev. William Richardson in charge of the congregations of Upper and Lower Fishing Creek. He was an ardent Whig, and was regarded as the head of the party who had broken up the assemblies of the Tories both at Alexander's Old Field and at Mobley's Meetinghouse. On Sunday morning, June 11, 1780, British Captain Christian Huck and his party took their way to the church, where they expected to find the pastor with his assembled congregation, determined, as was believed at the time, to burn both the church and the people inside, by way of warning to other "disturbers of the King's peace." The pastor had fortunately escaped. The Friday before, he had shouldered his rifle and taken the field, joining Captain John McClure, one of the young men of his congregation, who was then with Sumter across the State line. On their way to the church the British killed, with circumstances of great atrocity, William Strong, an inoffensive and pious young man, who was, at the time of their assault upon him, reading his Bible. Mrs. Simpson, the wife of the pastor, while sitting at her breakfast table, heard the report of the gun which killed young Strong and announced the approach of the enemy. The church was but a short distance from the dwelling-house of the minister. Huck's party went first to the house. Mrs. Simpson, seeing their approach, fled with her four children and concealed herself in an orchard. Huck's party rifled the house of everything valuable, destroyed the bedding, and, after taking all the clothing and other articles they fancied, set fire to the house, which was soon burned to the ground, together with a valuable library of books and important manuscripts which were in Mr. Simpson's study.

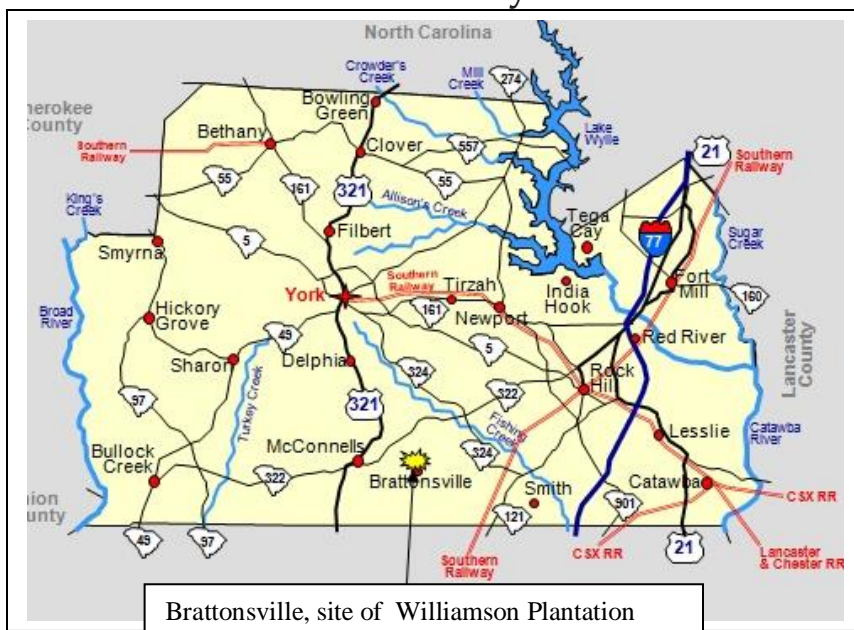


The Battle known as “Huck’s Defeat” at Williamson’s Plantation

After the action of Captain Huck at Fishing Creek Presbyterian Church, near what would become the Locke property along Fishing Creek in Chester County, the people in the area, including the southern part of York County along Fishing Creek, wanted revenge, and the Colonial troops camped along the Catawba River to the east saw an opportunity to avenge the defeat of Buford at the Battle of The Waxhaws just over a month earlier.

On 11 July, Huck captured James McClure and Edward Martin molding lead musket balls and ordered their execution the next morning. During that evening, McClure’s sister Mary raced to Sumter’s camp at Nation Ford to inform her father Captain John McClure. A large detachment immediately left to attack Huck.

Huck's style in the Catawba River Valley was to rough-up backcountry women, confiscate food and horses, and generally threaten prison and death to any who dared resist the British. This simply encouraged more men to join the rebels, who were organizing a militia brigade under Brigadier General Thomas Sumter. On July 11, 1780, Huck raided the home of the partisan leader Captain John McClure on Fishing Creek in present-day Chester County, caught his brother and brother-in-law with newly made bullets, and sentenced them to hang as traitors at sunrise the next day. Huck's detachment, consisting of about 35 British Legion Dragoons, 20 New York volunteers, and 60 Loyalist militia, then advanced once more into York County and arrived at the plantation of another Whig militia leader, Colonel William Bratton, later that evening. Shortly thereafter, one of Huck's soldiers put a reaping hook to the neck of Col. Bratton's wife, Martha, in an unsuccessful attempt to discover Bratton's whereabouts. Huck's second-in-command, Lieutenant William Adamson of the New York Volunteers, intervened and disciplined the offending Loyalist soldier. Huck next arrested three elderly neighbors of the Brattons, including Col. Bratton's older brother Robert, and told them they too would be executed the next day.



Huck then proceeded a quarter of a mile southeast of Bratton's plantation to the neighboring house of an elderly Whig named James Williamson, where he and his approximately 115 men made camp for the night. The five prisoners were secured in a corncrib to await execution.

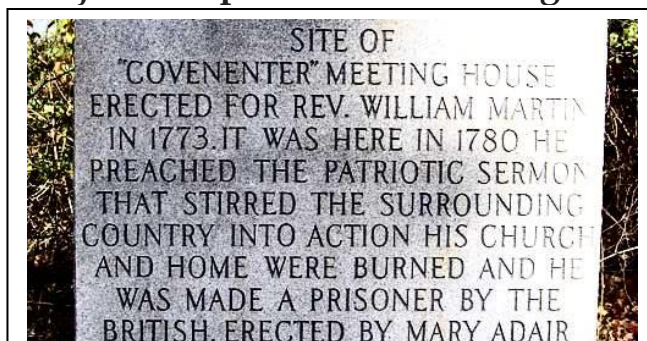
With intelligence provided by John McClure's younger sister, Mary, and a Bratton family slave named Watt, the loosely organized Patriot forces swarmed after Huck. About 150 arrived in the vicinity of Williamson's plantation that night, commanded by experienced militia officers. After a brief reconnaissance and some discussion, they agreed to attack Huck from three directions simultaneously.

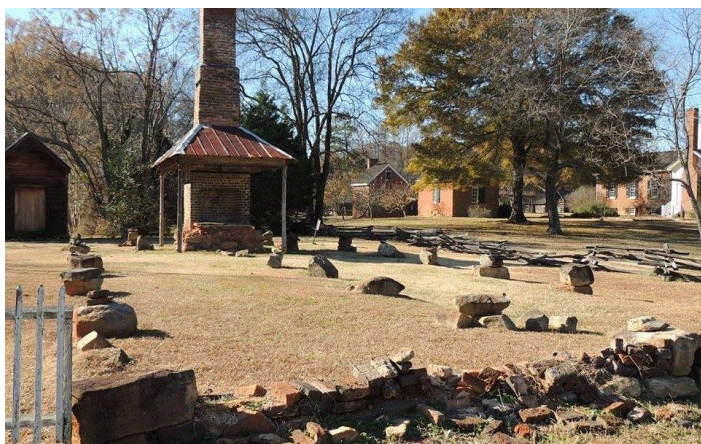
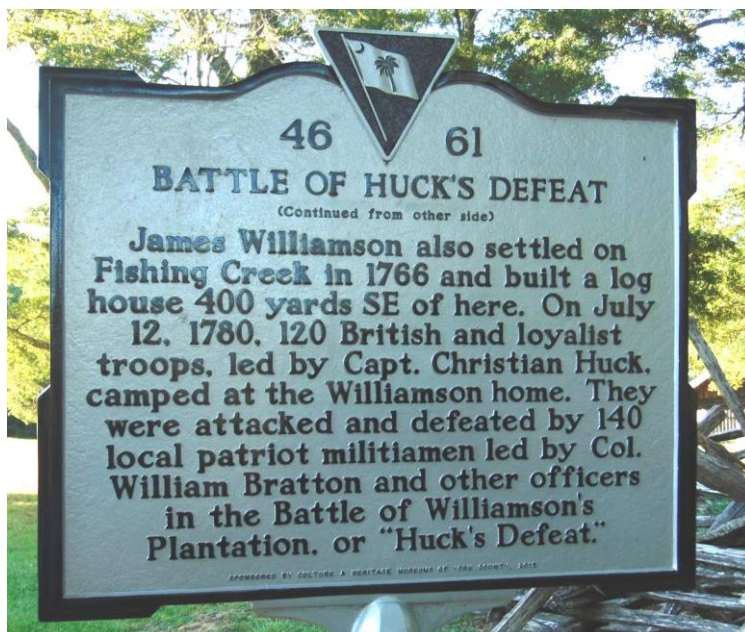
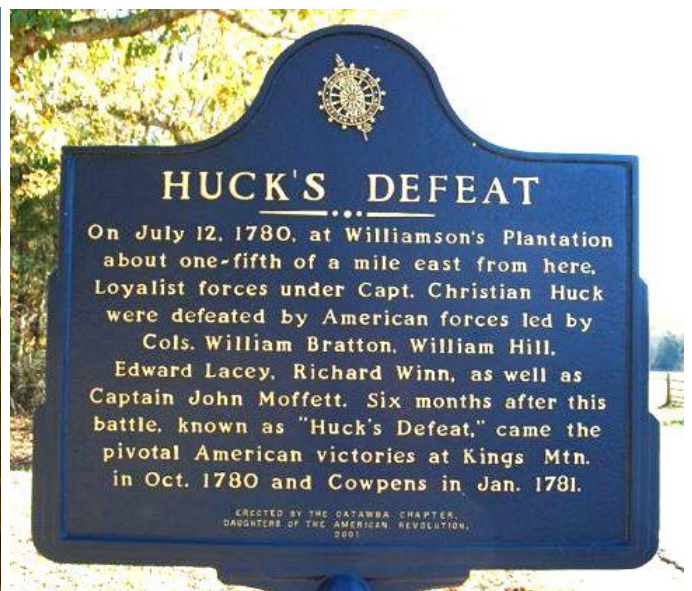
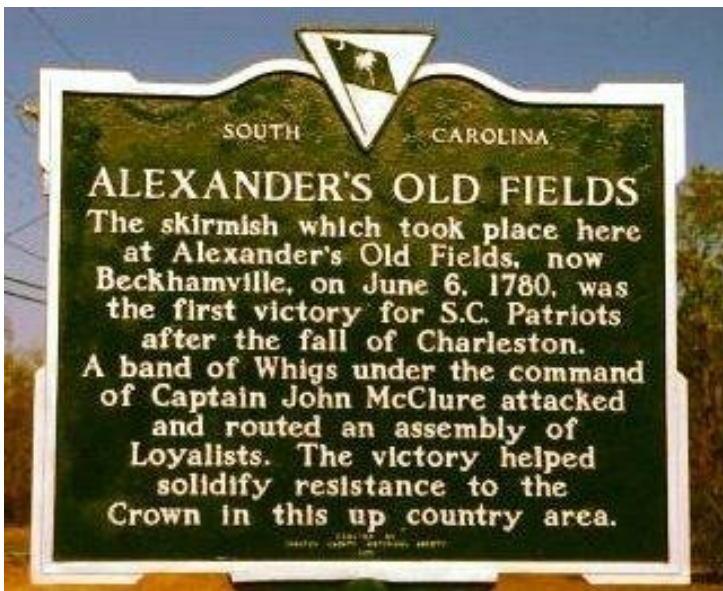
Huck's security was extremely lax. Shortly after sunrise, at least two of the Patriot groups managed to attack simultaneously. The British and Loyalist troops were caught completely by surprise; many were still asleep. The partisans rested their rifles on a split rail fence, from which "they took unerring and deadly aim" at their opponents as they emerged. Huck mounted a horse to rally his troops and was shot in the head by John Carroll, who had loaded two balls in his rifle. Some of the Loyalists surrendered while others fled, hotly pursued by Whigs seeking vengeance. Tory losses were very high. Tarleton later reported that only twenty-four men escaped. Patriot losses were one killed and one wounded; the five prisoners were also released from the corncrib unharmed.



Although the numbers engaged were small, the importance of the skirmishes was immediately clear. As South Carolina historian Walter Edgar has written, "The entire backcountry seemed to take heart. Frontier militia had defeated soldiers of the feared British Legion." Volunteers streamed in to join the partisan militia brigade of General Thomas Sumter.

Monument at Rocky Mount Presbyterian Church...





Remains of the kitchen at the Williamson Plantation site...



Edgar has called Huck's Defeat "a major turning point in the American Revolution in South Carolina." It was the first of more than thirty-five important battles in South Carolina in late 1780 and early 1781, all but five of which were partisan victories. This chain of successes was essential to the major Patriot victories at King's Mountain and Cowpens. Because of those victories, General Cornwallis was forced to abandon Charlotte, and eventually arrive at Yorktown in Virginia, where he was defeated by General George Washington. The British General surrendered to the future President.

This Locke Newsletter needs Your Help

I'm sure you noticed that this newsletter is light on family news such as births, weddings, passings, and general news. That's because I depend on you to notify me when you have something to share. Please take some time to write or call me with anything that you think will be important for our entire extended Locke family to know. My phone in the mountains is 828-288-4142, and my email is Mountainvann@gmail.com

